

BEGINNING POINT OF THE U.S. PUBLIC LAND SURVEY

On the Ohio-Pennsylvania boundary, East Liverpool

This is the point where the rectangular-grid land survey system established for “disposing of lands in the western territory” (the Old Northwest) began. As directed by the Ordinance of 1785, public lands were to be divided into townships six miles square, and each township was then subdivided into 36 sections of 1 square mile each. This was the first mathematically designed system adapted by any modern country, and its imprint remains indelible on the American landscape. The actual beginning point, on the northern shore of the Ohio River on the border between Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia (then Virginia), is now inundated, but a nearby marker commemorates the site. (Also in Beaver County, Pennsylvania.)